

In the United States Court of Federal Claims

OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

No. 09-606V

Filed: September 18, 2013

CAMILLE VEGA-WILLARD,

*

UNPUBLISHED

*

Special Master Dorsey

Petitioner,

*

*

Joint Stipulation on Damages;

v.

*

influenza (flu) vaccine;

*

transverse myelitis (TM)

SECRETARY OF HEALTH

*

AND HUMAN SERVICES,

*

*

Respondent.

*

Ronald C. Homer, Conway, Homer & Chin-Caplan, Boston, MA, for petitioner.

Darryl R. Wishard, United States Department of Justice, Washington, DC, for respondent.

DECISION¹

On September 15, 2009, Camille Vega-Willard (petitioner) filed a petition pursuant to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program.² 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2006). Petitioner received an influenza (flu) vaccine on October 31, 2007. Petitioner alleged that she sustained the first symptom or manifestation of the onset of transverse myelitis (TM) within six days of receipt of her flu vaccine. Petitioner also alleged that she experienced the residual effects of her injuries for more than six months.

On September 18, 2013, the parties filed a stipulation, stating that a decision should be

¹ Because this decision contains a reasoned explanation for the undersigned's action in this case, the undersigned intends to post this ruling on the website of the United States Court of Federal Claims, in accordance with the E-Government Act of 2002, Pub. L. No. 107-347, § 205, 116 Stat. 2899, 2913 (codified as amended at 44 U.S.C. § 3501 note (2006)). As provided by Vaccine Rule 18(b), each party has 14 days within which to request redaction "of any information furnished by that party: (1) that is a trade secret or commercial or financial in substance and is privileged or confidential; or (2) that includes medical files or similar files, the disclosure of which would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of privacy." Vaccine Rule 18(b).

² The National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program is set forth in Part 2 of the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, Pub. L. No. 99-660, 100 Stat. 3755, codified as amended, 42 U.S.C. §§ 300aa-1 to -34 (2006) (Vaccine Act or the Act). All citations in this decision to individual sections of the Vaccine Act are to 42 U.S.C.A. § 300aa.

entered awarding compensation.

Respondent denies that the vaccine either caused or significant aggravated petitioner's alleged symptoms, any of her ongoing symptoms, or any other injury. Nevertheless, the parties agree to the joint stipulation, attached hereto as Appendix A (the stipulation). The undersigned finds the stipulation reasonable and adopts it as the decision of the Court in awarding damages, on the terms set forth therein.

The parties stipulated that petitioner shall receive the following compensation:

1. **A lump sum of \$550,000.00, in the form of a check payable to petitioner.** This amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. §300aa-15(a), except as set forth below and in ¶8(b) of the stipulation, attached as Appendix A.
2. An amount sufficient to purchase an annuity contract described in paragraph 10 of the stipulation, paid to the life insurance company from which the annuity will be purchased, subject to the conditions and terms contained in the stipulation, attached as Appendix A.

Stipulation ¶¶ 8-11.

The undersigned approves the requested amount for petitioner's compensation. Accordingly, an award should be made consistent with the stipulation.

In the absence of a motion for review filed pursuant to RCFC Appendix B, the clerk of the court **SHALL ENTER JUDGMENT** in accordance with the terms of the parties' stipulation.³

IT IS SO ORDERED.

s/ Nora Beth Dorsey
Nora Beth Dorsey
Special Master

³ Pursuant to Vaccine Rule 11(a), entry of judgment is expedited by the parties' joint filing of notice renouncing the right to seek review.

IN THE UNITED STATES COURT OF FEDERAL CLAIMS
OFFICE OF SPECIAL MASTERS

CAMILLE VEGA-WILLARD,

 Petitioner,

v.

SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES

 Respondent.

STIPULATION

The parties hereby stipulate to the following matters:

1. Camille Vega-Willard, petitioner, filed a petition for vaccine compensation under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-10 to 34 (the “Vaccine Program”). The petition seeks compensation for injuries allegedly related to petitioner’s receipt of the influenza (“flu”) vaccine, which vaccine is contained in the Vaccine Injury Table (the “Table”), 42 C.F.R. § 100.3 (a).

2. Petitioner received her flu vaccine on October 31, 2007.

3. The vaccination was administered within the United States.

4. Petitioner alleges that she sustained the first symptom or manifestation of the onset of transverse myelitis (“TM”) within six days of receipt of the vaccine, and that she experienced the residual effects of this injury for more than six months.

5. Petitioner represents that there has been no prior award or settlement of a civil action for damages on her behalf as a result of her condition.

6. Respondent denies that petitioner suffered the onset of TM as the result of her October 31, 2007, flu vaccination, and denies that the vaccine caused her TM and current disabilities.

7. Maintaining their above-stated positions, the parties nevertheless now agree that the issues between them shall be settled and that a decision should be entered awarding the compensation described in paragraph 8 of this Stipulation.

8. As soon as practicable after an entry of judgment reflecting a decision consistent with the terms of this Stipulation, and after petitioner has filed an election to receive compensation pursuant to 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), the Secretary of Health and Human Services will issue the following vaccine compensation payments:

a. A lump sum of \$550,000.00, which amount represents compensation for all damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a), except as set forth in paragraph 8.b., in the form of a check payable to petitioner;

b. An amount sufficient to purchase the annuity contract described in paragraph 10 below, paid to the life insurance company from which the annuity will be purchased (the "Life Insurance Company").

9. The Life Insurance Company must have a minimum of \$250,000,000 capital and surplus, exclusive of any mandatory security valuation reserve. The Life Insurance Company must have one of the following ratings from two of the following rating organizations:

- a. A.M. Best Company: A++, A+, A+g, A+p, A+r, or A+s;
- b. Moody's Investor Service Claims Paying Rating: Aa3, Aa2, Aa1, or Aaa;
- c. Standard and Poor's Corporation Insurer Claims-Paying Ability Rating: AA-, AA, AA+, or AAA;
- d. Fitch Credit Rating Company, Insurance Company Claims Paying Ability Rating: AA-, AA, AA+, or AAA.

10. The Secretary of Health and Human Services agrees to purchase an annuity contract

from the Life Insurance Company for the benefit of petitioner, Camille Vega-Willard, pursuant to which the Life Insurance Company will agree to make payments periodically to Camille Vega-Willard for all remaining damages that would be available under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a), as follows:

- a. Beginning as soon as practicable after the date of judgment, \$1,755.15 per month for life only.

The payments provided for in this paragraph 10 shall be made as set forth above. Petitioner will continue to receive the annuity payments from the Life Insurance Company only so long as she, Camille Vega-Willard, is alive at the time that a particular payment is due. Written notice to the Secretary of Health and Human Services and to the Life Insurance Company shall be provided within twenty (20) days of Camille Vega-Willard's death.

11. The annuity contract will be owned solely and exclusively by the Secretary of Health and Human Services and will be purchased as soon as practicable following the entry of a judgment in conformity with this Stipulation. The parties stipulate and agree that the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the United States of America are not responsible for the payment of any sums other than the amounts set forth in paragraph 8 herein and the amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 12 herein, and that they do not guarantee or insure any of the future annuity payments. Upon the purchase of the annuity contract, the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the United States of America are released from any and all obligations with respect to future annuity payments.

12. As soon as practicable after the entry of judgment on entitlement in this case, and after petitioner has filed both a proper and timely election to receive compensation pursuant to

42 U.S.C. § 300aa-21(a)(1), and an application, the parties will submit to further proceedings before the special master to award reasonable attorneys' fees and costs incurred in proceeding upon this petition.

13. Petitioner and her attorney represent that they have identified to respondent all known sources of payment for items or services for which the Program is not primarily liable under 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g), including State compensation programs, insurance policies, Federal or State health benefits programs (other than Title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. § 1396 et seq.)), or entities that provide health services on a pre-paid basis.

14. Payments made pursuant to paragraph 8 and any amounts awarded pursuant to paragraph 12 of this Stipulation will be made in accordance with 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(i), subject to the availability of sufficient statutory funds.

15. The parties and their attorneys further agree and stipulate that, except for any award for attorneys' fees and litigation costs, and past unreimbursable expenses, the money provided pursuant to this Stipulation either immediately or as part of the annuity contract, will be used solely for petitioner's benefit as contemplated by a strict construction of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(a) and (d), and subject to the conditions of 42 U.S.C. § 300aa-15(g) and (h).

16. In return for the payments described in paragraphs 8 and 12, petitioner, in her individual capacity, on behalf of her heirs, executors, administrators, successors or assigns, does forever irrevocably and unconditionally release, acquit and discharge the United States and the Secretary of Health and Human Services from any and all actions or causes of action (including agreements, judgments, claims, damages, loss of services, expenses and all demands of whatever

kind or nature) that have been brought, could have been brought, or could be timely brought in the Court of Federal Claims, under the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program, 42 U.S.C. § 300 aa-10 et seq., on account of, or in any way growing out of, any and all known or unknown, suspected or unsuspected personal injuries to or death of petitioner resulting from, or alleged to have resulted from, the flu vaccination administered on October 31, 2007, as alleged by petitioner in an amended petition for vaccine compensation filed on September 15, 2009, as amended February 3, 2010, in the United States Court of Federal Claims as petition No. 09-606V.

17. If petitioner should die prior to entry of judgment, this agreement shall be voidable upon proper notice to the Court on behalf of either or both of the parties.

18. If the special master fails to issue a decision in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation or if the Court of Federal Claims fails to enter judgment in conformity with a decision that is in complete conformity with the terms of this Stipulation, then the parties' settlement and this Stipulation shall be voidable at the sole discretion of either party.

19. This Stipulation expresses a full and complete negotiated settlement of liability and damages claimed under the National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act of 1986, as amended, except as otherwise noted in paragraph 12 above. There is absolutely no agreement on the part of the parties hereto to make any payment or to do any act or thing other than is herein expressly stated and clearly agreed to. The parties further agree and understand that the award described in this Stipulation may reflect a compromise of the parties' respective positions as to liability and/or amount of damages, and further, that a change in the nature of the injury or condition or in the

items of compensation sought, is not grounds to modify or revise this agreement.

20. Petitioner hereby authorizes respondent to disclose documents filed by petitioner in this case consistent with the Privacy Act and the routine uses described in the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program System of Records, No. 09-15-0056.

21. This Stipulation shall not be construed as an admission by the United States or the Secretary of Health and Human Services that petitioner suffered the onset of TM as the result of her flu vaccination or that the vaccine caused her TM or any other injury.

22. All rights and obligations of petitioner hereunder shall apply equally to petitioner's heirs, executors, administrators, successors, and/or assigns.

END OF STIPULATION

Respectfully submitted,

Petitioner:

Camilie Vega-Willard
CAMILLE VEGA-WILLARD

ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
PETITIONER:

by Joseph Lepper
Rule 83.1(c)(2)
RONALD C. HOMER, ESQ.
Conway, Homer & Chin-Caplan, P.C.
16 Shawmut Street
Boston, MA 02116
(617) 695-1990

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL:

Vincent J. Mayanoski
VINCENT J. MAYANOSKI
Deputy Director
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146

AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE
OF THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH
AND HUMAN SERVICES:

Vito Caserta
VITO CASERTA, M.D., M.P.H.
Acting Director, Division of
Vaccine Injury Compensation (DVIC)
Director, Countermeasures Injury
Compensation Program (CICP)
Healthcare Systems Bureau
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
5600 Fishers Lane
Parklawn Building, Mail Stop 11C-26
Rockville, MD 20857

ATTORNEY OF RECORD FOR
RESPONDENT:

Darryl R. Wishard
DARRYL R. WISHARD
Trial Attorney
Torts Branch
Civil Division
U.S. Department of Justice
P.O. Box 146
Benjamin Franklin Station
Washington, DC 20044-0146
(202) 616-4357

Dated: 9/18/13